

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A 8**

4 December 1985

Italian Says Intelligence Service Tried to Influence Agca Testimony

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Special to The New York Times

ROME, Dec. 3 — An Italian racketeer turned state's evidence told a court here today that former officials of the Italian intelligence service, working with organized crime leaders, prompted the convicted assailant of Pope John Paul II to link the shooting in 1981 to Bulgaria.

It was the first time that a witness had supplied the court with details of possible ties between the assailant, Mehmet Ali Agca, and the intelligence service and between his testimony and the machinations of Italian organized crime groups.

Testifying to a court looking into the purported plot to kill John Paul, the racketeer, Giovanni Pandico, a leader of a Naples organized crime gang, said he personally attended meetings in a southern Italian jail between Gen. Pietro Musumeci, the former deputy chief of military intelligence, and Mr. Agca.

Mr. Pandico said the goal of the effort was "to persuade Agca to accuse the Bulgarians."

Under intense cross-questioning by the chief judge, however, Mr. Pandico was unable to explain numerous discrepancies between his account and earlier versions of the events that he gave in interviews and when questioned by Italian magistrates.

'He's a Slanderer!'

Responding to Mr. Pandico's assertions, Mr. Agca leaped from his chair, his face contorted in anger, and shouted: "He's a slanderer! I am seeing this man for the first time. What lies! It is a plot against me."

Chief Judge Severino Santiapichi struggled to maintain order, as Mr. Agca angrily stalked around the witness stand and Mr. Pandico heatedly shouted back: "You know very well that we met with Musumeci and we once even called each other friends. You are an exported slanderer!"

Members of the Italian intelligence service, including General Musumeci, were convicted by a court in Rome earlier this year of subverting the service for illegal ends.

Mr. Pandico said the intelligence officials, in an unusual deal, obtained the

cooperation of Raffaele Cutolo, the head of organized crime in Naples, in coaching Mr. Agca. The cooperation reportedly came about after the gang leader asked the officials to delay his transfer from a jail in the southern city of Ascoli Piceno to another prison.

Mr. Pandico said gang leaders sought the delay in Mr. Cutolo's transfer after they were tipped off that he would be killed during the move.

Mr. Pandico has given differing accounts of the people who purportedly took part in the meetings with Mr. Agca and of the dates of the gatherings.

Despite the discrepancies, the testimony is considered particularly important because East bloc governments, including the Bulgarian Government, have consistently charged that Mr. Agca was coached by Western intelligence services to implicate Bulgaria.

Mr. Pandico, neatly groomed and fashionably dressed in a dark blue double-breasted suit, described in detail how members of the Naples gang jailed in Ascoli Piceno, with the help of the prison chaplain, the Rev. Mariano Santini, befriended Mr. Agca by showering him with gifts, including carpeting for his sparsely furnished jail cell and \$150 to \$200 to purchase clothing.

The prison at Ascoli Piceno was virtually run by the Naples underworld during Mr. Cutolo's stay.

Mr. Pandico described a meeting that he said took place in the prison director's office in January 1982 at which General Musumeci purportedly agreed to delay Mr. Cutolo's transfer, provided the gang leader persuade Mr. Agca to collaborate in attributing the assassination attempt to Bulgaria.

Mr. Agca forcefully denied any contacts with the racketeers or the intelligence service.

"The jail was a center of corruption," he said, but added: "But I was separated from it all. I was rigorously guarded day and night. He has come to cast doubt on the Bulgarian connection."